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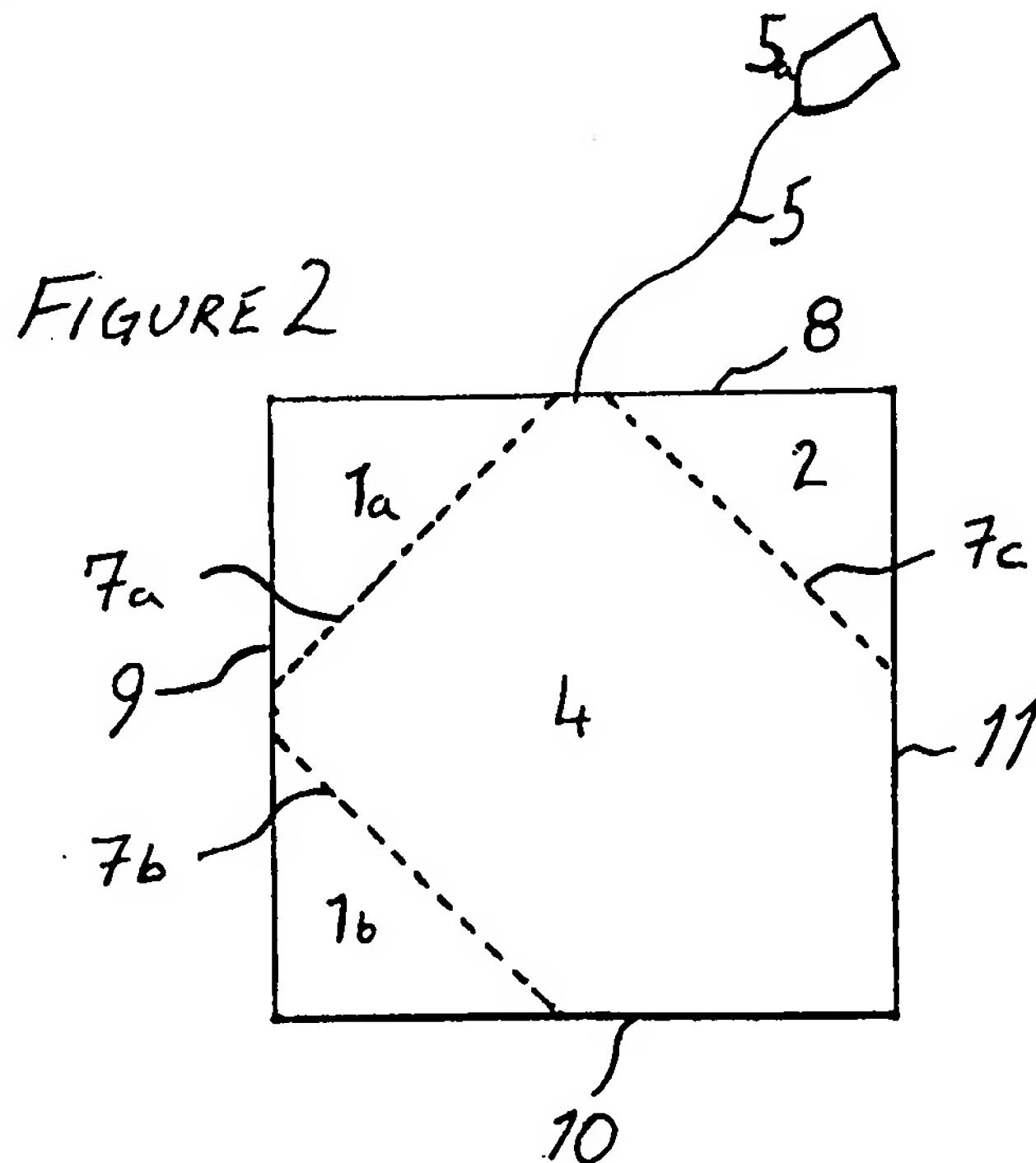
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(54) Multi-compartment beverage pack

(57) A unit pack comprising a first compartment 4 containing a unit dose of finely divided vegetable matter such as tea or coffee and at least one second compartment 1, 2 containing a unit dose of flavouring material such as milk powder and/or sugar granules. Immersion of the pack in a body of water allows the flavouring material and at least part of the vegetable matter to blend with the water to form a beverage.

The compartments may be detachably connected to each other or to a spine portion. The pack may have a tag 5 or similar means to facilitate withdrawal from the water.

A beverage is prepared by optionally detaching and discarding one or more compartments from the pack, and introducing the remaining compartments into a receptacle either prior to or subsequent to at least partially filling the receptacle with hot water.



The claims were filed later than the filing date within the period prescribed by Rule 25(1) of the Patents Rules 1990.

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FIGURE 1

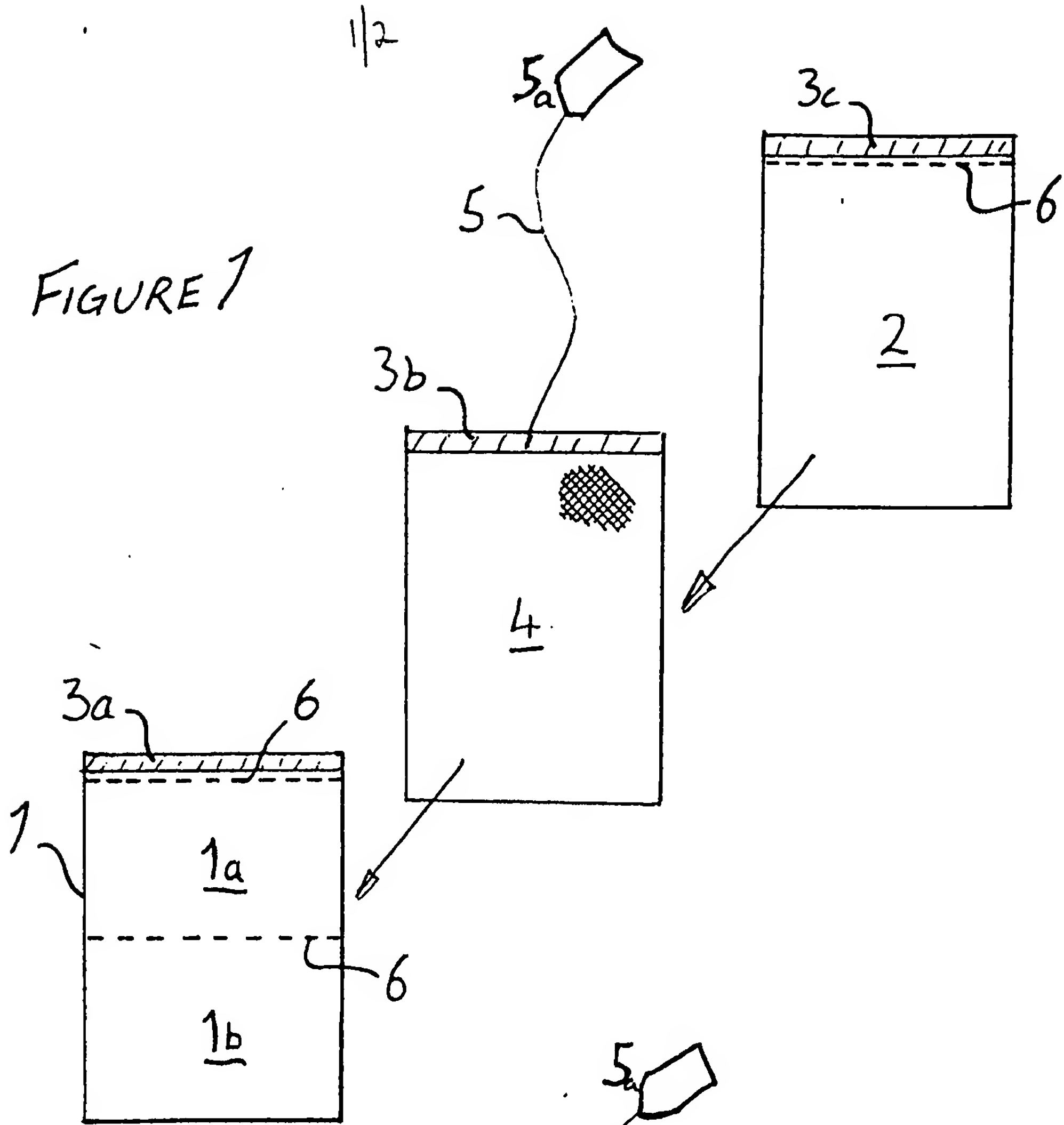


FIGURE 2

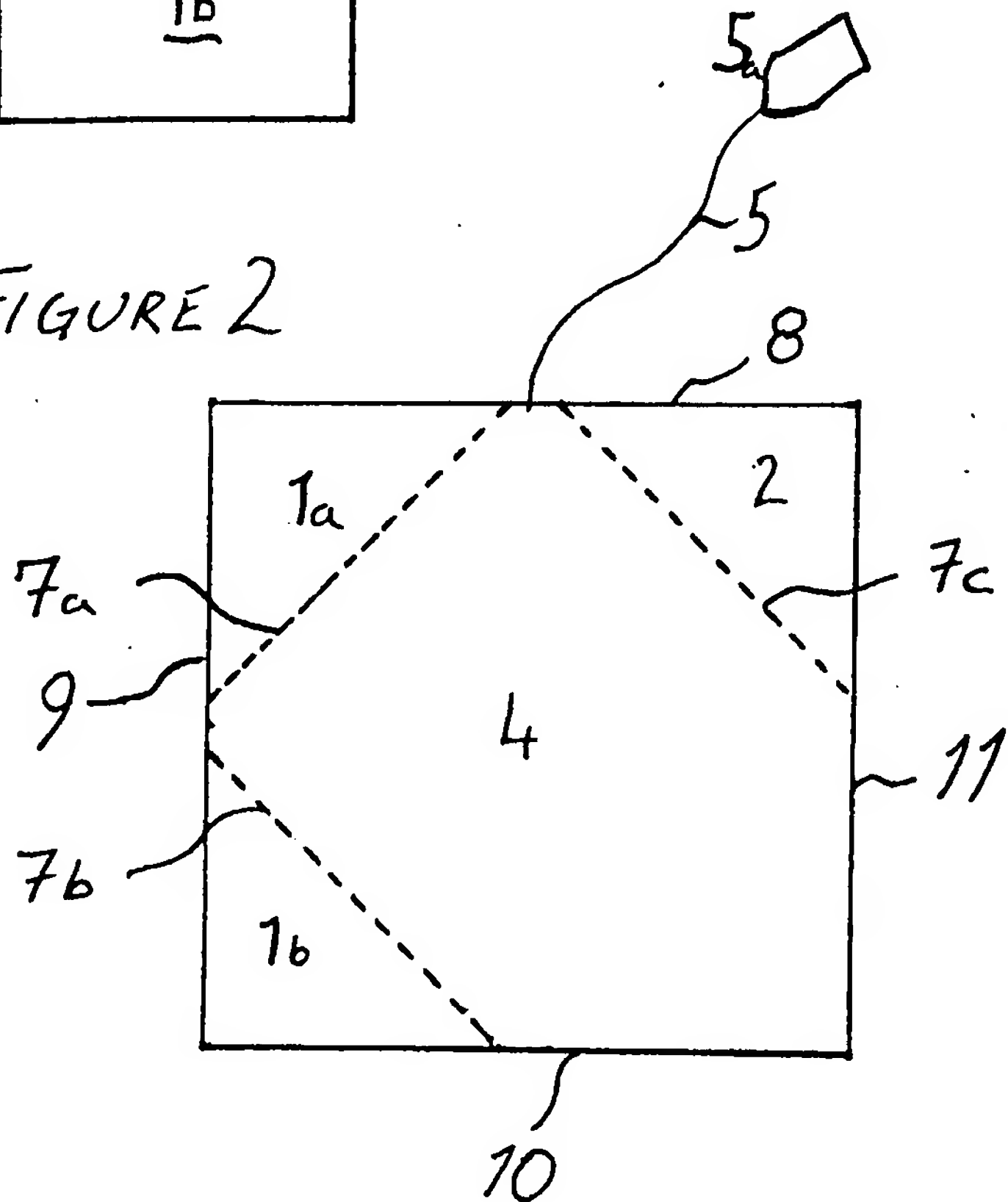
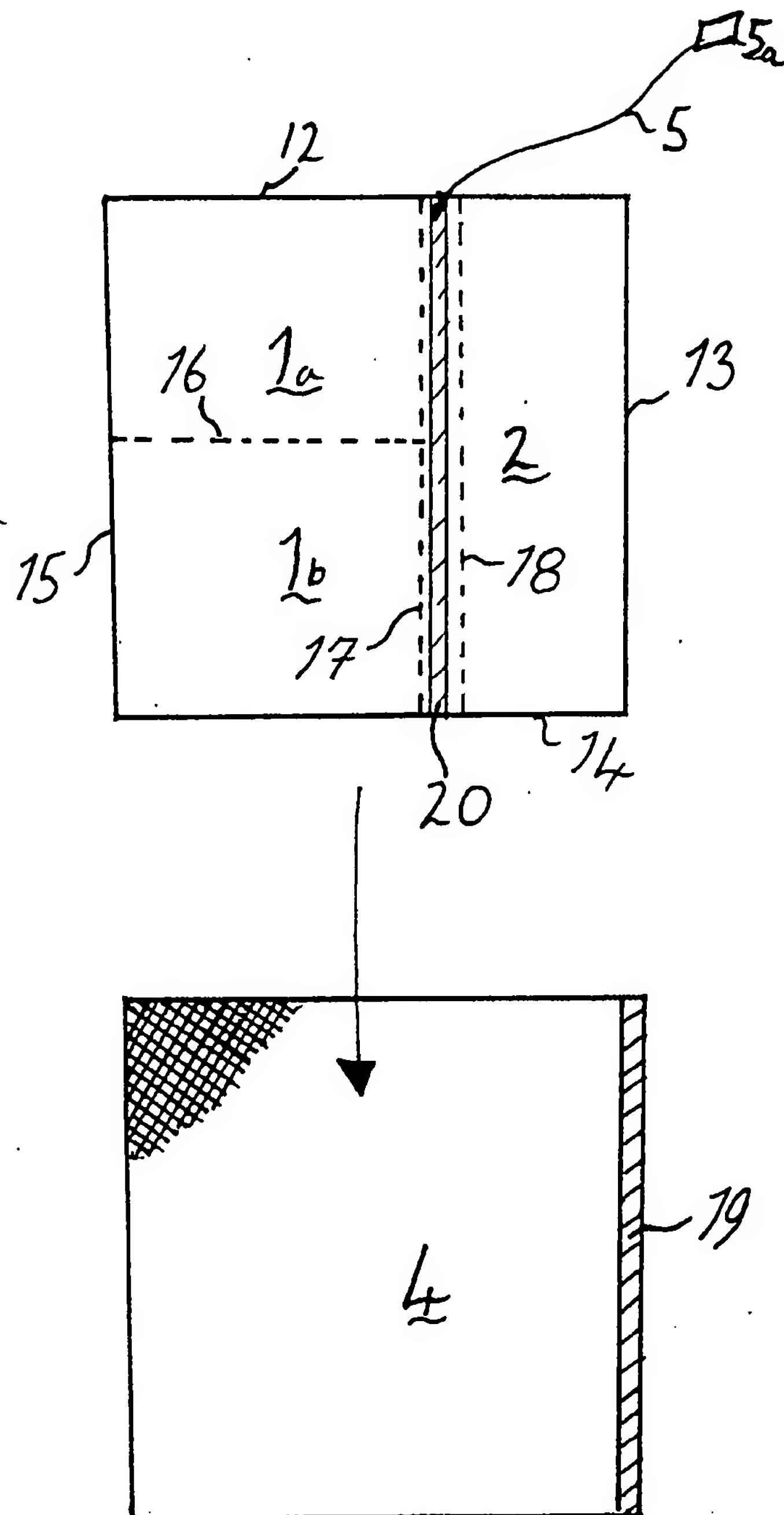


FIGURE 3



Beverage Pack

This invention relates to a pack containing ingredients for making a beverage, such as tea, coffee or the like.

Tea bags are well known and generally consist of a rectangular (or circular) sachet of perforated paper containing dried tea leaves. In use, the tea bag is placed in hot water to produce an infusion which the consumer then drinks either on its own, or, more commonly, mixed with one or more flavouring agents such as milk and/or sugar, according to preference. Similar bags are known which contain ground coffee beans, for infusion with water to form coffee, which may be mixed with sugar and/or milk or "coffee creamer".

According to a first aspect of the invention, there is provided a unit pack comprising a first compartment containing a unit dose of finely divided vegetable matter which can form a beverage on immersion in water, and at least one second compartment containing a unit dose of flavouring material for said beverage, said pack being such that it can be immersed in a body of water to permit said flavouring material and at least part of said vegetable matter to blend with said water to form said beverage.

The finely divided vegetable matter may be in the form of dried tea leaves, ground coffee beans; or dehydrated tea, coffee, cocoa or the like, in the form of powder or granules.

Advantageously, the flavouring material is in dried particulate form, and may for example be dried milk powder, sugar granules or the like.

It is preferred that the first compartment, and more preferably also the second compartment where it contains dried particulate flavouring material, is of a flexible material preferably of cellulose material such as paper or the like, the compartment(s) preferably being provided with a plurality of perforations therethrough which perforations are advantageously dimensioned to prevent whole particles of the vegetable matter (or dried flavouring material) from passing therethrough.

It is preferred that the first and second compartments of the pack are detachably connected to the pack such that said compartments can be detached, with the contents of the respective compartments retained therein.

Advantageously, the pack may further comprise a third compartment containing further flavouring material which may be the same as the flavouring material contained in the second compartment, or different thereto. The third compartment is preferably also detachably connected to the pack.

In a first embodiment of the invention, the compartments may each be connected to and detachable from a spine anchor portion of the pack, with each compartment preferably being detachable from the spine portion along a tear or cut line provided along a sealed edge of the respective compartment adjacent the spine portion.

In a second embodiment of the invention, the compartments comprising the pack may be connected along common sealed edges of adjacent compartments, the compartments being detachable along a tear or cut line along the common sealed edges. The sealed edges are advantageously scored or, more preferably, perforated for ease of detachment of the adjacent compartments.

In either embodiment, it is preferred that the pack is provided with means for placement thereof in, and removal thereof from, a receptacle containing a body of water. Advantageously, a flexible line, typically having a tab at the free end thereof, is connected to the pack for this purpose.

The present invention further comprises a method of preparing a beverage, which comprises the steps of:

- (a) optionally detaching and discarding one or more compartments from a pack according to the invention; and
- (b) introducing the remaining compartments into a receptacle either prior to or subsequent to at least partially filling said receptacle with a potable liquid, such as water.

The invention will now be further described in specific embodiments, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is an exploded plan view of a first embodiment of a unit pack according to the invention;

Figure 2 is a plan view of a second embodiment of a unit pack according to the invention; and

Figure 3 is an exploded plan view of a third embodiment of a unit pack according to the invention.

Referring initially to Figure 1, a unit beverage pack suitable for making a predetermined volume of a beverage comprises a central compartment 4 containing a dosed quantity of coffee or tea, a milk compartment 2 containing a dosed quantity of dried milk powder and a sugar compartment 1, the latter compartment comprising sub- compartments 1a and 1b, each containing a respective dosed quantity of sugar grains. The compartments are of suitable gauze or foraminous material, such as perforated paper (see hatching) such that the milk powder, tea leaves (or coffee powder) and sugar are retained in their respective compartments 2,4,1 when in their dry state.

The compartments 1,2,4 are connected along the sealed uppermost edges 3a,3b,3c, by means of gluing (with suitable non toxic adhesive) or stitching, to form a spine 3. Connected to the spine 3 is a thread line 5 and tab 5a which enable the consumer to place the pack in and remove it from a container containing hot or boiling water. In use, the consumer may, according to taste, detach from the pack the milk compartment 2 and/or the one or more of the sugar sub-compartments 1a and 1b by tearing along the sealed perforated edges 6. The pack (and hence the remaining compartments) is then placed into a container of hot or boiling water by means of the tab 5a and threadline 5 where the contents of the pack combine with the water to create a beverage to the desired taste of the consumer.

Referring now to the pack of Figure 2, in this embodiment the individual compartments, designated according to their contents by like numerals to the compartments of Figure 1, are connected to adjacent compartments along common sealed and perforated edges 7a,7b,7c. The compartments are again of perforated gauze or paper material but for ease of manufacture are integrally formed in a pack of rectangular shape from two facing rectangular blanks (sealed around the outer edges 8,9,10,11 and along the perforated edges 7a,7b,7c).

Finally, referring to Figure 3, there is shown a unit beverage pack having compartments again designated according to their contents by like numerals to the compartments of Figures 1 and 2. In this embodiment, the milk powder compartment 2 and sugar sub-compartments 1a and 1b are formed from rectangular blanks sealed around the outer edges 12,13,14,15 and along the common perforated compartment edges 16,17,18. The coffee- or tea-containing compartment 4 is connected along its edge 19a (again either by gluing or stitching) to the pack spine 20 to form a unitary pack. The individual compartments may then be detached from the pack at the discretion of the user in the manner described above.

CLAIMS:

1. A unit pack comprising a first compartment containing a unit dose of finely divided vegetable matter which can form a beverage on immersion in water, and at least one second compartment containing a unit dose of flavouring material for said beverage, said pack being such that it can be immersed in a body of water to permit said flavouring material and at least part of said vegetable matter to blend with said water to form said beverage.
2. A unit pack according to claim 1, wherein said finely divided vegetable matter is in the form of powder or granules.
3. A unit pack according to claim 1 or 2, wherein said finely divided vegetable matter comprising any of the following:
dried tea leaves, ground coffee beans, dehydrated tea, coffee or cocoa.
4. A unit pack according to any of claims 1 to 3, wherein said flavouring is in dried particulate form.
5. A unit pack according to any of claims 1 to 4, wherein said flavouring material comprises dried milk powder and/or sugar granules.
6. A unit pack according to any of claims 1 to 5, wherein said first compartment comprises flexible cellulosic material.
7. A unit pack according to any of claims 1 to 6, wherein said second compartment comprises flexible cellulosic material.
8. A unit pack according to claim 6 or 7, wherein said flexible cellulosic material comprises paper.

9. A unit pack according to any of claims 1 to 8, wherein said compartments are provided with a plurality of perforations therethrough.
10. A unit pack according to claim 9, wherein said perforations are dimensioned to prevent whole particles of said finely divided vegetable matter or dried flavouring material from passing therethrough.
11. A unit pack according to any of claims 1 to 10, wherein said first and second compartments are detachably connected to said pack such that said compartments can be detached, with the contents of the respective compartments retained therein.
12. A unit pack according to any of claims 1 to 11, which pack comprises a third compartment containing further flavouring material.
13. A unit pack according to claim 12, wherein said flavouring material contained in said third compartment is the same as the flavouring material contained in said second compartment.
14. A unit pack according to claim 12, wherein said flavouring material contained in said third compartment and said flavouring material contained in said second compartment are different.
15. A unit pack according to any of claims 12 to 14, wherein said third compartment is detachably connected to said pack.
16. A unit pack according to any of claims 1 to 15, wherein said compartments are each to be connected to and detachable from a spine anchor portion of said pack.

17. A unit pack according to claim 16, wherein each compartment is detachable from said spine portion along a tear or cut line provided along a sealed edge of the respective compartment adjacent said spine portion.
18. A unit pack according to any of claims 1 to 15, wherein said compartments are connected along common sealed edges to adjacent compartments.
19. A unit pack according to claim 18, wherein said compartments are detachable along a tear or cut line along said common sealed edges.
20. A unit pack according to claim 18 or 19, wherein said sealed edges are scored or perforated for ease of detachment of the adjacent compartments.
21. A unit pack according to any of claims 1 to 20, wherein said pack is provided with means for placement thereof in, and removal thereof from, a receptacle containing a body of water.
22. A unit pack according to claim 21, wherein said placement means comprises a flexible line having a tab at the free end thereof.
23. A method of preparing a beverage, which comprises the steps of:
 - (a) optionally detaching and discarding one or more compartments from a pack according to any preceding claim; and
 - (b) introducing the remaining compartments into a receptacle either prior to or subsequent to at least partially filling said receptacle with water.
24. A unit pack substantially as hereinbefore described, with reference to the accompanying drawings.